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5KA Radio Talk by Don Dunstan

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28/1/70.

GOOD EVENING. IT'S ONLY DURING THE LAST TEN YEARS OR SO THAT THE PUBLIC AT LARGE HAS REALISED THAT, IN ADDITION TO THE FLINDERS AND ADELAIDE UNIVERSITIES, WE HAVE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA A THIRD AND VITAL PLACE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION, THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY.

FIRST AS THE SCHOOL OF MINES, AND NOW AS THE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, IT HAS IN FACT BEEN IMPORTANT TO THE STATE FOR MANY YEARS THROUGH, FOR INSTANCE, ITS TRAINING OF METALLURGISTS. AND UNTIL VERY RECENTLY THE S.A.I.T. WAS REGARDED THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA AS THE LEADING COLLEGE OF ITS TYPE - A COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION WHICH SPECIALISED, AT A HIGHLY EXPERT LEVEL, IN THE PROBLEMS OF A TECHNOLOGICAL AGE. THE S.A.I.T. HAS OVER THE YEARS WORKED WITH, AND PRODUCED CAPABLE STAFFS FOR, SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S INDUSTRIES. IN MANY AREAS IT WAS ONE OF THE REASONS WHY WE MANAGED TO ATTRACT INDUSTRIES AND GENERAL INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION.

UNDER THE LABOR GOVERNMENT, IT WAS DECIDED THAT A MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR EXPENDITURE - OR INVESTMENT IS PERHAPS THE BETTER WORD - SHOULD BE MADE TO GIVE THE S.A.I.T. THE NEW BUILDINGS, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR ITS INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE STATE. IT WAS REALISED THAT THIS WAS NECESSARY IF WE WERE TO MAINTAIN OUR LEAD OVER THE OTHER STATES. OUR PLAN WAS SIMPLY THIS: IN AN ABSENCE OF OIL OR MINERAL WEALTH, THE ONE WAY BY WHICH SOUTH AUSTRALIA COULD PROGRESS IN A DYNAMIC WAY WAS BY INVESTING IN BRAIN-POWER, THE KIND OF BRAIN-POWER THAT ATTRACTS DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES, CAPITAL FOR DEVELOPMENT, AND NEEDS A TALENTED WORK FORCE.

WELL, WHAT HAS HAPPENED NOW? REFLECTING AUSTRALIA'S GROWING INDUSTRIAL BASE, AND THE KNOW-HOW AND SKILLS THAT BOTH GOVERNMENTS AND INDUSTRIES REQUIRE, NEW COLLEGES OF ADVANCED

EDUCATION HAVE BEEN FORMED IN OTHER STATES. ON TOP OF THIS, THE TECHNOLOGISTS IN SUCH COLLEGES HAVE ARGUED, QUITE REASONABLY, THAT THEIR SALARIES SHOULD AT LEAST BE EQUIVALENT WITH THE SALARIES PAID TO LECTURERS AND SENIOR LECTURERS AT UNIVERSITIES. TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA WOULD FOUNDER, THEY SAID, IF THE SALARIES PAID IN THE COLLEGES DID NOT OFFER AT LEAST SOME INCENTIVE NOT TO GO TO PRIVATE INDUSTRIES.

FOR MANY YEARS SOUTH AUSTRALIA LED THE WAY. WE HAD THE BEST COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION, AND UNTIL QUITE RECENTLY WE WERE PAYING ITS STAFF PROPERLY. THEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONED, FROM MR. JUSTICE SWEENEY, AN INDEPENDENT REPORT ON THE SALARIES OF LECTURERS AND SENIOR LECTURERS IN COLLEGES OF ADVANCED EDUCATION. AND THE RESULT WAS THAT JUSTICE SWEENEY AGREED IN PRINCIPLE WITH WHAT THE COLLEGE STAFFS HAD BEEN ARGUING FOR. HE SAID THAT "WHERE MEMBERS OF THE LECTURING STAFF HAVE THE QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE AND QUALITY OF PERFORMANCE ... HE HAD NO HESITATION IN RECOMMENDING THAT THEY SHOULD RECEIVE SALARIES EQUAL TO THOSE PAID IN THE UNIVERSITIES." HE ALSO SAID, AND I BELIEVE RIGHTLY, THAT "THE EXPENDITURE INVOLVED IN REMUNERATING LECTURERS WILL PAY HANDSOME DIVIDENDS IN THE INCREASE IN THE CONTRIBUTION WHICH THEIR STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE TO THE GROWTH OF THE NATION".

SO HOW ABOUT THE GROWTH IN THIS STATE? ALTHOUGH QUEENSLAND HAS FORMALLY ADOPTED THE SWEENEY REPORT, AND WHILE SALARIES AT COLLEGES OF ADVANCED EDUCATION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND VICTORIA ARE EQUAL TO THOSE OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS, IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA THE HALL GOVERNMENT HASN'T BUDGED, AND AS A RESULT THERE ARE SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN RECRUITING LECTURERS AND

AND TUTORS FOR THE INSTITUTE, WHICH WILL OBVIOUSLY INCREASE AS SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S SALARY SCALE FALLS FURTHER BEHIND THAT PAID IN THE OTHER STATES.

WHAT IS THUS HAPPENING IS THAT THE S.A.I.T., UNIQUE IN AUSTRALIA AS THE ONLY INSTITUTE ACTUALLY TEACHING FOR DEGREES, HAS MOVED FROM THE TOP TO THE BOTTOM OF THE LIST OF DESIRABLE TECHNOLOGICAL CENTERS INWHICH TO LEARN OR TEACH. MRS. STEELE, THE EVER-EMBATTLED MINISTER OF EDUCATION, HAS DECIDED TO LEAVE THE INSTITUTE'S SALARIES WHERE THEY WERE EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO, EVEN THOUGH UNIVERSITY SALARIES HAVE MOVED FOUR PERCENT AHEAD. SHE HAS AGAIN ANGERED EDUCATORS BY HER ^{BRISK}~~BRISK~~ HANDLING OF THE MATTER, WHILE THE GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE CAN NOW BE CREDITED WITH THE HIGHLY DUBIOUS HONOUR OF BEING THE INSTRUMENT WHICH STARTED A DECLINE IN S.A.I.T. STANDARDS.

AN INTELLIGENT GOVERNMENT SHOULD SEEK TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE PEOPLE ON ALL LEVELS. IT WOULD REALISE THAT THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IS VITAL TO THE STATE'S GENERAL TECHNOLOGICAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT. WITH OR WITHOUT THE WEALTH OF MINERALS, NO STATE CAN AFFORD NOT TO MAKE AN INVESTMENT IN BRAIN-POWER. IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, ^{NEWLY DISCOVERED} WITHOUT MINERALS, SUCH AN INVESTMENT IS EVEN MORE URGENT AND NEEDS TO BE COMMENSURATELY LARGE. THE PROBLEM IS A SIMPLE ONE. MRS. STEELE AND THE HALL GOVERNMENT CLEARLY LACK IN THE POLITICAL AREA THE KNOW-HOW AND SKILLS NEEDED TO GIVE GOOD GOVERNMENT. AND THE DANGER IS, WITH THE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, THAT IN THE INDUSTRIAL AREA THERE WILL SOON BE AN EQUIVALENT LACK OF KNOW-HOW AND SKILLS THAT WILL SERIOUSLY JEOPARDISE SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING.

GOOD NIGHT.